

Developing or Revitalizing Your Web Site

I. Where do I begin?

The goal of this workshop is to know where to begin to **develop** or **revitalize** your site. Before you begin to develop or redevelop your site, consider these questions:

- A. Why do you have or want to have a Web site?
- B. What information will people look for on your site?
- C. What information do *you* want to provide your visitors?

The best place to begin is by planning your project. Planning allows you to see the big picture of your project and what is ahead. You will meet with the key people involved in the project to determine who your Web site audience is and to assign specific project responsibilities and timelines. Also during this time you will establish the architecture of your site. The next step is the actual production of your Web site. This is when you create templates and/or the actual pages, edit content, and incorporate images onto Web pages. The final part of your project is maintaining the site. Think about this: why would someone come back to your site if it never changes? You will need to continue to update your content and images, add more pages, and check for broken links.

Building a Web site is a lot like juggling; many pieces of the project are afloat at the same time. However, you do not have to complete one piece of the Web project before moving on to the next. Furthermore, because information on the Web becomes obsolete quickly, you should have a strategy to develop your Web site and to keep all the pieces moving, so that you end up with a live Web site within a set amount of time. Otherwise, you may spend a lot of time creating Web pages which never go live and/or information becomes lost or obsolete. Just as the nature of the Internet is ever-changing, your Web site should continue to evolve. Once you grasp this concept, you can publish a Web site without all the pressures of making it "perfect". Many near-perfect Web sites are off-line awaiting perfectionism; meanwhile the Web site is nonexistent. Avoid letting your site join those ranks.

Note: This model works especially well with departments where others make the final decisions, but you do the work.

Things to Avoid: Due to browser issues, avoid using: *Java Applets, Flash, frames, layers, and JavaScript*. If you choose to use these, have other options for viewing your pages. This is not a hard rule, but we suggest avoiding them until you are proficient in these areas.

II. Planning

Whether you are creating a Web site for the first time or redeveloping, we suggest meeting with the key people who will be involved with final decisions about the Web site and those who will be contributing to the development. The purpose of this initial meeting is to identify the phases of the project, to establish completion deadlines for each phase, to designate individuals responsible for each component of development, and to set a tentative date for the site to go live. To help you to keep track of your progress, a check list is included at the end of this handout.

A. Target Audience

To help determine what kind of information to include on your Web site, it is helpful to identify your target audience and their needs. The target audience is the primary group of people who you want to visit your Web site. For many MHC departments, the target audience is primarily prospective and current students. Other visitors may include: parents, faculty, staff, and/or alumnae. Can you think of others who might come to your site?

To meet the needs of your visitors, consider - what kind of information would they be looking for on your Web site? For example, on an academic site, visitors may look for:

- Specific program/department information
- Contact information
- Profiles for: faculty, staff, students or alumnae
- Calendar events
- List of frequently asked questions
- Related links
- Internships

What types of information do you think your visitors will be looking for? The answer to this question will help you identify the different types of information to include on your Web site and to establish the titles/headings. In addition, this will assist you in determining how the information will flow on your site. Further details about establishing Web site architecture will be covered later in this workshop.

You may want to do an informal survey of students, staff, and faculty; ask what kind of information they would be looking for on your Web site. Review sites that are similar to the one you are creating for additional topics.

B. Project Timelines & Responsibilities

There is something about having a deadline that helps to us complete a project. This is especially true if a Web site is just one of the many responsibilities of your job. Long-term goals can be set into time frames of three to four months, or a semester, especially if the developer is a student who will be leaving at the end

of the semester. Keep in mind that one person may be writing the content, while the design is being created by another. Meanwhile, if you have a Profile section, send an email to staff and faculty requesting photos and biographies. Assign names and deadlines to each of the tasks on the checklist (last page of this handout).

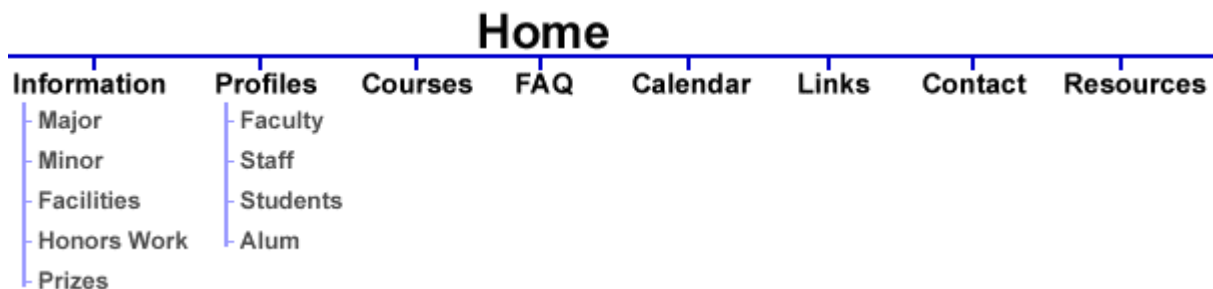
C. Establish Web Site Architecture

The architecture of a Web site reflects how the information is organized and how your visitors will be able to navigate your site. A Web site is like a tree with many interlocking branches which you can get to, from the main trunk or another branch, in a nonlinear way. This allows visitors freedom to explore/navigate the site in a way appropriate for their needs. It is highly recommended that you establish your architecture BEFORE you begin to develop the Web site. To establish your Web site architecture:

1. Consider what kind of information your Web site visitors will be seeking and what information you want them to find. Then list the types of information you plan to include on your Web site. Small Post-it Notes or index cards can be helpful for this process. Write one idea/topic per note.
2. Next, cluster similar types of information together. Review the clusters and create a title for each "group" on a separate sticky note.
3. Reconsider the wording of each category. Use titles that clearly and briefly describe what kind of information your visitors will expect to find under these titles. Short titles allow visitors to scan them quickly.

Organize related information into small logical units rather than creating pages with scrolling text that goes to infinity and beyond. Generally a Web page that prints on 3 pages or less is an appropriate size, however this is not a firm rule.

Here is an example of categories used for the English department:
(<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/engl/>)



For more ideas of what kind of information to include on your site, visit similar sites on the World Wide Web.

D. Web Page Design Options

You may choose to use a Web page layout which follows the MHC Web design (details below) or you may design, or create your own page layout. What is important, regardless of layout/design, is that your site is easy to navigate and that it is clear to your visitors where they are on your site at all times.

We suggest your Web pages be designed inside of a table with a width of either 580 pixels or 100%, so that your page is viewable on a 13" browser and so that your visitors do not have to scroll left to right. Length of the page is not an issue, as visitors do no mind scrolling up or down on a page. Do not set a height for your tables.


View an example of a Web page with table set at 580 pixels:
http://www.mtholyoke.edu/help/creating-pages/style/table_580.html

View an example of a Web page with table set at 100 percent:
http://www.mtholyoke.edu/help/creating-pages/style/table_100.html

MHC Web Design Options


Workshops are available for obtaining the MHC Web look for your site. The following are example of page design options, which may be obtained by using the Document Interface Wizard. www.mtholyoke.edu/go/wizard

Two columns

About MHC News & Events Library & Technology Offices & Services Campus Life Athletics Admission Academics Alumnae HOME MY MHC DIRECTORIES SITEMAP SEARCH HELP	
 About Mount Holyoke College	
This column is 143 pixels wide Local navigation link #1 Local navigation link #2 Local navigation link #3 The search form code is here: Search This Site <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/> Service Link #1 Service Link #2 Service Link #3	This column is 434 pixels wide
Home MyMHC Directories SiteMap Search Help About the College Academics Admission Alumnae Athletics Campus Life Library & Technology News & Events Offices & Services Copyright © 2001 Mount Holyoke College. This page created and maintained by Dan Wilga. Last modified on December 20, 2001.	

2-columns page layout - used for most web pages. Local navigation is in column 1 and text is in column 2, MHC navigation and banner at top of page. MHC navigation at the bottom is optional.

Three columns

About MHC News & Events Library & Technology Offices & Services Campus Life Athletics Admission Academics Alumnae HOME MY MHC DIRECTORIES SITEMAP SEARCH HELP		
 About Mount Holyoke College		
This column is 143 pixels wide Local navigation link #1 Local navigation link #2 Local navigation link #3 The search form code is here: Search This Site <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="GO"/> Service Link #1 Service Link #2 Service Link #3	This column is 287 pixels wide Anything in this nested table will have white space around it Some regular text, using <code>class=round</code> to remove the underline link	This column is 146 pixels wide Anything in this nested table will have white space around it
Home MyMHC Directories SiteMap Search Help About the College Academics Admission Alumnae Athletics Campus Life Library & Technology News & Events Offices & Services Copyright © 2001 Mount Holyoke College. This page created and maintained by Dan Wilga. Last modified on December 20, 2001.		

3 columns page layout - commonly used for a home page. Same specs as described above with an additional third column, which is for placing "News" or "Highlights".


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One column

[About MHC](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Library & Technology](#) | [Offices & Services](#) | [Campus Life](#) | [Athletics](#)
[Admission](#) | [Academics](#) | [Alumni](#) | [HOME](#) | [MY MHC](#) | [DIRECTORIES](#) | [SITEMAP](#) | [SEARCH](#) | [HELP](#)



2001 Soccer Schedule

Head Coach: Kristen Martini
Phone: (413) 538-2112
Email: kmartini@mholyoke.edu

[PROGRAM SCHEDULE](#)
[TEAM ROSTER](#)
[PROFILE](#)
[COACHES](#)
[RECRUIT MENT](#)

[Team Page](#) [CLICK HERE FOR GAME HIGHLIGHTS!](#)

Day	Date	Opponent	Home/Away	Time	Result	Conf. Record	Overall Record
Sat	Sep 8	Elms	Away	2:00	W (5-0)	0-0	1-0
Tue	Sep 11	Salem State	Away	4:00	Postponed Date: 10/4	0-0	2-0-1
Sat	Sep 15	Mass. College	Home	1:00	W (6-0)	0-0	2-0

[Home](#) | [MyMHC](#) | [Directories](#) | [SiteMap](#) | [Search](#) | [Help](#)
[About the College](#) | [Academics](#) | [Admission](#) | [Alumni](#) | [Athletics](#)
[Campus Life](#) | [Library & Technology](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Offices & Services](#)

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1 column page layout - used for pages where information or an image is wider than 580. The MHC banner will generally be included on the page, but the rest of the page will be void of red lines.

Navigation bar/footer only

[About MHC](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Library & Technology](#) | [Offices & Services](#) | [Campus Life](#) | [Athletics](#)
[Admission](#) | [Academics](#) | [Alumni](#) | [HOME](#) | [MY MHC](#) | [DIRECTORIES](#) | [SITEMAP](#) | [SEARCH](#) | [HELP](#)



Squash Recruiting

Head Coach: Kate Herlihy
Phone: (413) 538-2362
Email: kherlihy@mholyoke.edu

If you would like more information about the Mount Holyoke College Squash program, please complete the form below. Click on the **Submit** button to send your request to Kate Herlihy.

Name (required)
 Email Address (required)
 Street Address (required)
 City (required)
 State/Region (req.) ZIP/Postal Code Country Daytime Phone Number
 Age Gender Academic Year
 School Name
 School Address
 City (required)
 State/Region ZIP/Postal Code

Thank you for your interest in the Mount Holyoke Squash Team!

[Athletic Home](#) | [Library/Technology](#) | [Athletic Club Space](#)
[Handball Court & Fitness Center](#) | [Outdoor Soft Courts](#) | [Fields of Athletic](#)
[Handball House](#) | [Athletic Center](#)

[Return to "Squash Coach Sharon Crow"](#)
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[About the College](#) | [Academics](#) | [Admission](#) | [Alumni](#) | [Athletics](#)
[Campus Life](#) | [Library & Technology](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Offices & Services](#)

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0-columns (Navigation & Footer only) page layout - this layout is used when you want to have the MHC navigation and footer only, allowing you to place items in between the top and the bottom. It is especially helpful when using forms or when the content area needs to be wider than 580 pixels.

Expandable column

[About MHC](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Library & Technology](#) | [Offices & Services](#) | [Campus Life](#) | [Athletics](#)
[Admission](#) | [Academics](#) | [Alumni](#) | [HOME](#) | [MY MHC](#) | [DIRECTORIES](#) | [SITEMAP](#) | [SEARCH](#) | [HELP](#)



Mount Holyoke College

Return to "About Mount Holyoke College"



Return to "About Mount Holyoke College"

[Home](#) | [MyMHC](#) | [Directories](#) | [SiteMap](#) | [Search](#) | [Help](#)
[About the College](#) | [Academics](#) | [Admission](#) | [Alumni](#) | [Athletics](#)
[Campus Life](#) | [Library & Technology](#) | [News & Events](#) | [Offices & Services](#)

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1 expandable column page layout - used for pages where a wider area is needed for text or images. One expandable column is a good choice if you use forms, since any styles above it can become ragged as the edges get pushed out by text input fields.

III. Production

A. Create Template(s) and Sample Web Page(s)

We suggest that you create your template and one or two sample pages for the core group to review. Once the group agrees on the way the page samples look, then go ahead and populate your Web site with the rest of the pages. We also suggest you look at your timelines again and adjust them accordingly. You may decide to hold off on some areas for a later time if you are running close to your deadlines.

LITS workshops are available for learning how to use various Web development tools, such as Dreamweaver for creating Web pages, and Photoshop for creating and manipulating images. <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/training>

A Document Interface Wizard is available to help you obtain the MHC Web design more easily.

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/help/creating-pages/DI/wizard.shtml>

B. Site Management

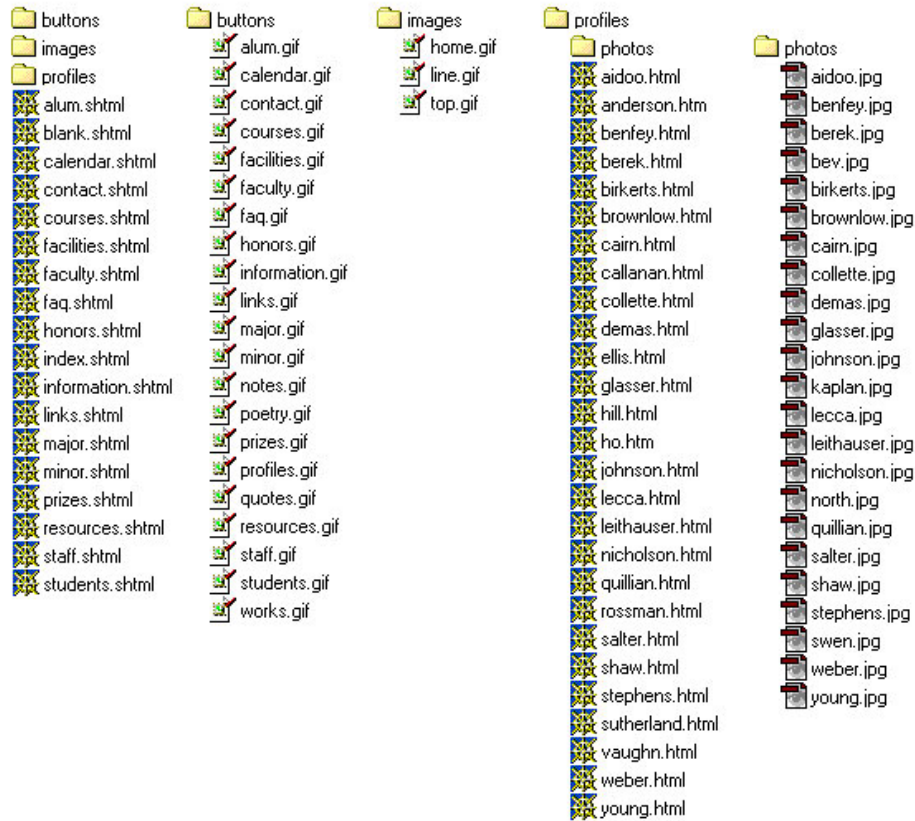
Site Management and site architecture seem similar, but architecture is about the site's navigation and site management is about files and folders and their location on the Web server. The organization of your Web files and folders should follow the same type of order as a filing cabinet; create folders and place similar file types items inside each folder to make it easier to find things. For example, place all your images in one file folder named images so it is easy to locate the images quickly when you want to insert them on a Web page.

1. File Structure

The individual responsible for building the Web site should determine the file structure before they begin to populate the Web site. They should also be familiar with the importance of home/index pages.

The example below reflects how the file structure is set up in the English Department Web space. In this example, notice

- The root folder is titled "engl" and it contains additional folders.
- All navigation buttons are inside a folder titled "buttons".
- Images are in a folder titled "images".
- All the profile HTML pages reside in a folder titled "profiles".
- Photos for those profiles are in a folder "photos" which is inside the "profiles" folder.



2. File Size

Your visitors will lose patience if your site takes too long to download. Therefore the file size for Web pages should be kept under 32K. If your pages exceed this size, you may want to consider splitting the document into additional Web pages as well as reducing the number of graphic files per page.

Images are often the cause for slow loading Web pages. Graphics should be optimized for the Web so that the file size is as small as possible without losing the quality of the image you want displayed. Another option is to display a thumbnail image which links to the larger image on a separate page. If the larger image will be slow loading, alert your visitor by including the file size with the thumbnail link.

Dreamweaver Tip:

If you are using Dreamweaver as your HTML editor, the file size and downloading time are indicated at the bottom right side of the window (as shown below).



3. File Names

Here are guidelines for naming files for the Web:

a. Avoid spaces in file names

When naming files or images AVOID SPACES. You can use an underscore or dash to break up words if necessary; i.e.: file_mgmt or file-mgmt.

b. Create simple file names

Consider naming HTML files the same as the title of the page. Users often try to decode the Web address of pages to infer the structure of Web sites. Thus, file name and folders should contain descriptive directory and file names that reflect the nature of the information space.

Example

Page title: General Information

File name: general.shtml

c. Avoid special characters

Avoid using tilde (~) and special characters .

Avoid any non A-z, AZ, or 0-9.

d. Use lowercase file names

Users sometimes need to type the URL, so try to minimize the risk of typos by using short names with all lower-case characters. This is a guideline and not a firm rule.

e. Be careful of using dates in file names

A file name should remain constant. Therefore, be careful when using dates in your file names. Consider using a date only for archival purposes.

C. Review Progress

It is important to set a date to reevaluate the full project timelines. About a month before the scheduled "go live" date, meet again to assess what is crucial to be completed by the time the site is live. Due to time restraints, there may be parts of the site that you will add later as the content becomes available.

Resources:

Web Style Guide for MHC

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/style/>

Web Glossary

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/help/creating-pages/style/glossary.shtml>

Document Interface Command Creation Wizard

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/wizard>

Current Workshop Schedules

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/go/training/>

Online LITS Workshop Evaluations

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/csit/training/eval.html>

Web Development Check List

	Task	Person Responsible	Completion Date
	Meet with Core Group:		
	Determine target audience		
	Establish project timelines		
	Determine Responsibilities:		
	who will write/edit content		
	who will obtain/create media		
	who will maintain & update the site		
	who will have final Web site approval		
	Establish architecture		
	Review page layout options		
	Set up another meeting to review progress		
	Create template and sample Web page		
	Meet with core group to review sample page, information flow, and timelines		
	Populate the Web site		
	Create images to enhance pages		
	Go live with the site		
	Maintain and continue to enhance site.		